

# ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

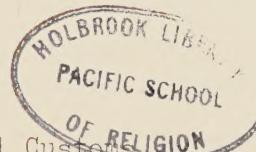
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## Canadian Roman Catholic Theologian Commends WCC

(New York) - Father Gregory Baum, a Canadian Roman Catholic theological teacher, has declared that "Catholics should be grateful to the World Council of Churches" for its open-minded attitude to Roman Catholic doctrine.

"There have never been so many Protestants sincerely wanting to study the doctrines of the Catholic church, to abandon inherited prejudices, and to understand the Catholic church as she is seen by her own members", he writes in an article in the Roman Catholic lay-sponsored weekly Commonweal published in New York.

"This does not mean that these men want to become Catholics", writes Father Baum, a member of the faculty of St. Basil's Seminary, Toronto, "but they desire to grasp the Catholic vision of Christianity as far as this can be done from the outside."

Pointing out that Pope Pius XII, in an instruction published in 1950, indicated that the ecumenical movement was "due in part to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost", the Canadian theologian commends the WCC because its documents and reports proclaim "the great themes of traditional Christianity. We hear the undiluted credal affirmations of the Trinity, the unity of Christ in two natures, the fall of humanity and its redemption in Christ, and the Christian's transformation in grace as an anticipation of the glory that is to come", he continues.



Father Baum asks for a better understanding by Roman Catholics of the real nature of the WCC and remarks that "some Catholics have little sympathy for the World Council and tend to look down on it rather smugly, as if it were our doing that Holy Church is the infallible witness to Christ's gospel". EPS, Geneva

#### Brethren Denounce Funeral Customs

(Champaign, Ill.) - The Church of the Brethren has denounced excessive burial expenses and public viewing of the deceased as "inconsistent with the Christian faith".

"Customs and practices which focus undue attention on the physical body at the time of death tend to deny faith in the life that is eternal", said a report approved by the 1,135 delegates to the church's annual meeting in Champaign, Ill.

It urged that memorial services be held some time after a private burial to "provide an experience of worship in which to express faith in life eternal".

In another session delegates heard fraternal delegate Bishop Reuben Mueller of the Evangelical United Brethren Church urge "deep and more manifest unity both within the Church of the Brethren and the whole body of Christ". He proposed conversations between the two bodies to seek closer organic relations. The Evangelical United Brethren Church was formed in 1946 by the merger of the Evangelical Church and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

EPS, Geneva

#### "Weeping Icons" Called "Sign of Divine Providence"

(Istanbul) - The Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Istanbul has designated three reported "weeping icons" of the Madonna observed recently in homes in Long Island, New York, as "a sign of Divine Providence".

In its first official statement on the phenomena, issued last week, the Synod declared that the icons indicate a need for the repentance of the faithful and for the furthering of the mission of the Greek Orthodox Church in America. It also authorized the erection of a convent near the site where the icons were first observed in March.

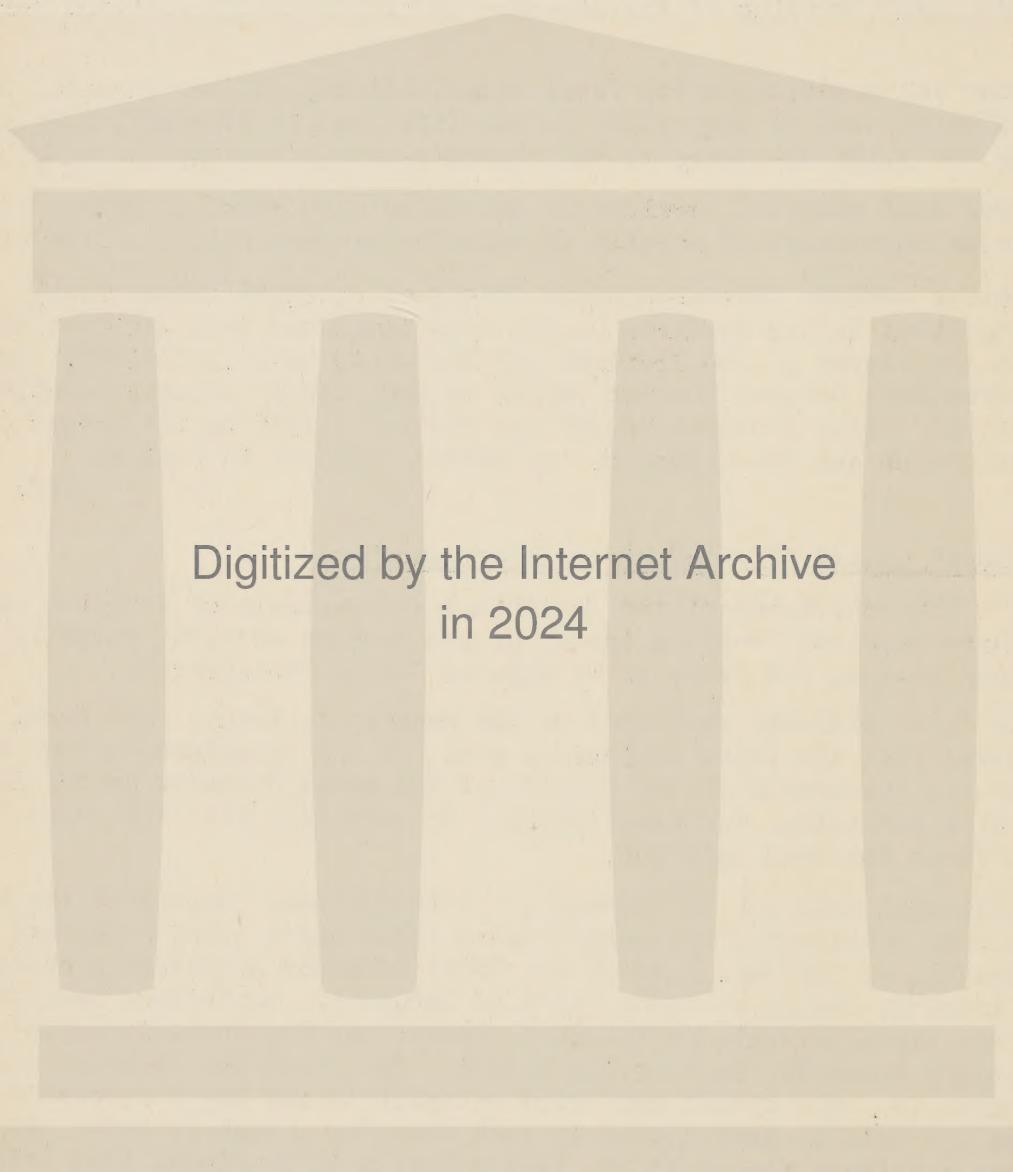
The statement said the 12 bishops and metropolitans comprising the Holy Synod have been considering the matter since receiving a personal report on the icons by Archbishop Iakovos, head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, during a recent visit to Istanbul. Archbishop Iakovos, who is one of the six presidents of the World Council of Churches, is reported to have personally observed the "weeping icons". The first was reported shedding tears on March 16, the second and third on April 12 and May 7 respectively. Their tears are said to have flowed in each case for a week or more. All three of the icons have been placed in St. Paul's Church in Hemstead, Long Island.

EPS, Geneva

#### Japan Churches Cable US NCC on Cancelled Eisenhower Visit

(New York) - The National Christian Council of Japan has sent a cable to the National Council of Churches (USA) concerning the cancellation of the visit of President Eisenhower to Japan.

The cable said: "Regrettable events prompted postponement presidential visit. War involvement fears and neutrality hopes underlay demonstrations. Basic issue internal politics. Vigorous good will toward American people continues."



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The message was signed by the Rev. Takeshi Muto, chairman, and the Rev. Kiyoshi Hirai, general secretary.

EPS, Geneva

#### US Nazarenes Seek \$10,000,000 for Evangelism

(Kansas City) - A \$10,000,000 goal for world evangelism in 1960-64 has been set by the Church of the Nazarene Foreign Missionary Society. The figure represents a \$1,000,000 increase over an earlier proposed goal.

Delegates meeting in Kansas City, Mo., voted the figure after hearing reports that during the past four years the mission agency had raised nearly a quarter of a million dollars more than its \$8,000,000 goal for 1956-60.

The Church of the Nazarene, one of the larger "holiness" bodies in the United States, was organised in 1908, by a group of dissidents from the Methodist Church. In 1959 it reported membership of 281,646 - an increase of 31,900 persons over 1955 - in 4,225 churches - an increase of 400 congregations in the same period. It has more than 50 missionaries working overseas. EPS, Geneva

#### Bishop Discusses Care of Very Old

(London) - An Anglican bishop has questioned whether it is morally right to use "extraordinary means" to keep the old and infirm alive.

The Bishop of Exeter, Dr. R.C. Mortimer, preaching at a service held in connection with meetings of the British Medical Association, said that it seems morally wrong to subject very old people to the acute discomfort of a serious operation or feeding by intravenous means.

"While in the Christian view there is a moral obligation to maintain the life of the very old by all ordinary means, there is no obligation to use extraordinary means", Bishop Mortimer declared. His comments have stimulated widespread discussion in the British press.

EPS, Geneva

#### African Views on Missionaries Described

(Greencastle, Ind.) - Africans want missionaries either to be neutral in the struggle between colonial powers and subject peoples, or to identify themselves with the aspirations of the people for self-determination, a US Methodist missions official has told a meeting in Greencastle, Ind.

What they do not want is for missionaries to give "lip service to the ideal of independence and then, when the chips are down, to keep silent or to side with the ruling power", said Dr. Eugene L. Smith, general secretary of the Methodist Division of World Missions.

Dr. Smith urged missionaries to become an integral part of the church in the area where they work and guard against the tendency to remake the church in the image of the church in their home countries. The modern missionary, particularly those from Western countries, must seek always to proclaim "the pure Gospel of Christ undiluted by cultural trappings and racial or national feelings", he declared.

Dr. Smith addressed some 480 Methodist missionaries, nationals and mission executives representing 44 countries at the 15th annual New and Furloughed Missionaries Conference.

EPS, Geneva



Queen Mother Will Attend Commemorative Service

(Edinburgh) - Queen Elizabeth, the British Queen Mother, will attend the Service of Thanksgiving marking the 50th anniversary of the World Missionary Conference at St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, Sunday, August 14.

Also attending will be church leaders from all over the world who will be in Scotland for the annual meetings of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (August 16-24) and the Administrative Committee of the International Missionary Council, at St. Andrews, Fife.

The sermon will be preached by the Rt. Rev. Chandu Ray, Bishop of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. Dr. John Baillie, principal-emeritus of New College, Edinburgh, one of the six WCC presidents, will give a brief address on the history of the World Missionary Conference.

The Conference held in 1910 in Edinburgh marked the beginning of the international missionary movement which, together with the faith and order and the life and work movements, resulted in the formation of the World Council in 1948.

EPS, Geneva

Plaque Honours Bishop Oxnam

(Washington, D.C.) - An oil portrait of retiring Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam and an engraved plaque paying tribute to his leadership in the World Council of Churches have been dedicated in the student lounge of the American University's School of International Service in Washington, D.C.

The inscription on the plaque, which was written by WCC general secretary, Dr. V.A. Visser 't Hooft, hails him as a bishop of the Methodist church "whose loyalty to its heritage led him to serve the Church Universal" and as first US president of the World Council of Churches "which he helped to bring into being and to make an effective instrument for worldwide Christian co-operation and united social and international justice". (See also EPS No. 24) EPS, Geneva

Protestant Prayers for Ecumenical Council?

(Arnoldshain, Germany) - A former staff member of the World Council of Churches has suggested that Protestant churches might arrange prayers for the Pope and the Second Vatican Council.

Dr. Hans-Heinrich Harms, cathedral preacher in Hamburg and associate director of the WCC's Study Division until this year, told an ecumenical seminar that it was a contradiction of Protestant thought not to trust that the Holy Spirit could promote church unity through the forthcoming Council.

He warned, however, against undue optimism about the results of the meeting and said that there was no present basis for official talks between the WCC's member churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

Dr. Harms opposed the idea that either Protestants or Roman Catholics should try to consolidate their existing positions. He said the issue at stake was whether the Council of the Roman Catholic Church succeeded in "opening doors to other churches" and making interconfessional discussion easier. He predicted that if the Council simply reiterated the familiar appeal to Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Christians to "return to Rome", this would make future conversations between Catholics and Protestants more difficult. EPS, Geneva



Spain Gets Roman Catholic Ecumenical Bulletin

(Barcelona) - A new Roman Catholic news bulletin on ecumenical affairs is being published in Spain under the direction of Father Salvador de les Borges, a Capuchin priest.

The first issue of the publication, "Orientacion y Informacion Ecumenica", gives information on the World Council of Churches and its member churches, including material on Italian Protestantism, the WCC's Third Assembly at New Delhi in late 1961 and last December's visit of World Council representatives to churches in the USSR.

"Every Christian must be a witness to truth and righteousness", says the bulletin. "In relation to the division of Christendom he will, however, be a poor witness unless he begins by knowing other confessions as they are, without distortion or prejudice".

EPS, Geneva

Timor Church Takes Stand on Communism

(Djakarta) - The Protestant Church on the Indonesian island of Timor has been asked to clarify its stand on Communism by people concerned about the activities of the Indonesian Communist Party among church adherents.

In a statement stressing the Church's positive role in spreading the Gospel to Christians and non-Christians, the Timor Synod says it will discuss whether to expel from the church members who join the Communist party, but that even if expelled, ex-church members will continue to be served by the church.

The Synod warns that pastors who take a Communist position will lose their standing in the church because "the Communist conviction is contrary to the testimony of Scripture".

The methods of Communism are also described by the Timor statement as incompatible with the Gospel and the "forgiving love" of the Cross.

The spread of Communism in Indonesia has caused a number of churches there to make statements for the guidance of their members.

EPS, Geneva

Vanderbilt Professors Retract Resignations

(Nashville, Tenn.) - Nine of the eleven faculty members of Vanderbilt University's Divinity School who resigned over the dismissal of Negro student James Lawson have agreed to return to their duties. (See EPS Nos 11, 12, 13, 22, 23, 24)

Their decision was announced following the offer of the University's Board of Trust to confer a degree on Mr. Lawson this year. Previously the Board had refused any reinstatement of the expelled student, whose participation in "sit-in" lunch-counter desegregation demonstrations in Nashville had been regarded as incitement to civil disobedience.

(Mr. Lawson, who is studying during the summer at Boston University's Divinity School, previously announced that a compromise solution reached at the expense of the divinity school's dean would not be acceptable to him.)

Dean J. Robert Nelson of the divinity school, who submitted his resignation in a strong letter to Vanderbilt chancellor Harvie Branscomb defending Mr. Lawson's right to reinstatement, was dismissed from his post on June 13 and not invited to return.



Before the nine faculty members withdrew their resignations Dr. Nelson had made it clear that their decision should not be swayed by loyalty to him. A statement issued by the nine at the time of their return said their action "should not be understood as in any way approving the summary dismissal of Dean Nelson from his official duties". The professors said they considered the dismissal "unjust and ungracious".

Commenting on the developments The Christian Century, non-denominational Protestant weekly, said it was "a partial victory for those who have sought justice for Mr. Lawson. At the same time, it is unjust that it seems to lay the onus for the Vanderbilt affair where it does not belong - on the dean of the Divinity School. Nobody worked longer, more patiently or at greater personal sacrifice for the preservation of the divinity school on a basis that would make it worthy of preservation than did Dean Nelson."

EPS, Geneva

#### In Brief

The Central Commission set up by the Pope to co-ordinate preparations for the Second Vatican Council (see EPS No. 22) includes 74 prelates and superiors of religious orders from all over the world. Eugenio Cardinal Tisserant, dean of the College of Cardinals in Rome, has been named as president.

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The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church (Suomi Synod) marked the 70th anniversary of its establishment in the United States at observances in Virginia, Minnesota, June 26-29. Dr. Ilmari Salomies, Archbishop of Finland, took part in the anniversary services. The church, founded by Finnish immigrants to the US, has a membership of 37,000.

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The National Christian Council of Korea has installed as its new general secretary the Rev. Simeon Kang, 51, former pastor of Seoul's oldest Protestant congregation, Seimoongan Presbyterian Church.

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Christian schools in Malaya working with government financial support have been told by the government that religious instruction in normal school hours must stop. Malaya's official religion is Islam. Many schools are preparing to conduct religious instruction, which has always been voluntary, after school hours.

\* \*

An American, Archbishop Martin J. O'Connor, has been named by the Pope as head of the special secretariat set up to deal with press, radio, television and film in connection with the Second Vatican Council. The archbishop is chairman of the Pontifical Commission on Cinema, Radio and Television and rector of the North American College in Rome.

\* \*

Several studies showing that Roman Catholic married couples use artificial birth control "in about the same measure" as non-Catholics have been reported by the director of the National Catholic Family Life Bureau in a speech in San Antonio, Texas. Msgr. Irving A. De Blank of Washington, D.C., deplored that many Catholics "follow the influence of their neighbours and do not take their cues for behaviour from a divinely inspired Church".

\* \*



When Ghana becomes an independent republic on July 1, prayers for British Queen Elizabeth II will be replaced in Anglican churches by prayers for its first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

\* \*

The death of Bishop Sandor Agoston of the Christian Reformed Church in Yugoslavia was reported last week in Geneva. Bishop Agoston had headed the 35,000 member church since before World War II. The church was founded by students of John Calvin in the 16th century. Its congregations are located in the Backa and Banat areas of northern Yugoslavia near the Hungarian border.

\* \*

Statistics compiled by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) show that 43.2 per cent of Protestant theological students come from "academic" families, as against 10.2 per cent of Roman Catholic theological students. Those with farm or working class background make up 6.3 per cent and 3.2 per cent respectively in the Evangelical Church. In the Roman Catholic Church 18.3 per cent come from working class families, 18.2 per cent from farm families and 16.4 per cent from families in trade and industry.

EPS, Geneva

#### Document

The National Synod of the French Reformed Church in June issued a statement on the Algerian conflict. The full text appears below.

The Church is not qualified to judge between the political alternatives before its members, but it must not try to preserve its own peace by excluding from its thinking the political questions that divide its members as well as its non-members.

Today the Algerian drama is a burden on our people. It saps their morale, shakes the authority of the state and threatens the country's unity.

Accordingly the synod calls upon parishioners to study the meaning of the Algerian conflict for church and country, with a view to finding, among the possible solutions, that which is compatible with the demands of the Word of God. The national Council of the church is requested to press on with this inquiry on behalf of the French Reformed Church and to mobilize for the purpose church members who are prepared to engage in it.

The Synod reminds all French people that the use of illegal methods by representatives of public order cannot be corrected by desertion or other forms of civil disobedience; nevertheless it draws the attention of the authorities of this country to the serious consequences of the use of such methods, which completely obscure, for some French young people, the demand for national solidarity.

